

# Volunteer Handbook



**Raptor Center**  
*of Tampa Bay, Inc.*

This manual was written by Nancy Murrah and is intended for the use of the volunteers of The Raptor Center of Tampa Bay.

If there are any questions, please contact Nancy at [nmurrahfirefly@gmail.com](mailto:nmurrahfirefly@gmail.com).

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## Who is The Raptor Center of Tampa Bay?

### An introduction

The mission of the Raptor Center of Tampa Bay continues to evolve. We have worked for the last four years on building our skills and honing our focus from solely rehabilitating hundreds of birds and small mammals each year to a focus on finding a suitable piece of land to build a Wildlife Rehabilitation Center. We are focused on rehabilitating wildlife with the goal of release back to the wild and to serve both the residents and visitors of Hillsborough and Polk Counties as well as surrounding areas with wildlife solutions and conservation experiences. We have grown to have strong partnerships with Hillsborough County Parks and Conservation Department, Polk County Sheriffs Animal Control, as well as local corporations such as Tampa Electric Company and Mosaic. Our goal is to create a Wildlife Rehabilitation Center and create a visitor experience that sparks the next generation of conservationists.

We are fortunate to have a Board of Directors and a strong volunteer base committed to advancing our mission and embracing the values that are detailed in our Plan. Even as we pursue these exciting initiatives, we are rescuing and treating our precious wildlife. We continually seek funding for the 1000+ birds and animals we rescue each year in addition to fund and build a new wildlife rehabilitation center in this area.

There is so much work to do to capitalize on all that this area has to offer. We are thankful for the time and resources that our board, members, volunteers and donors contribute to The Raptor Center of Tampa Bay. We hope that you will join us in our future endeavors to advance the work outlined in this Strategic Plan.



Sincerely,

Nancy Murrah  
President and Founder  
Federal and State Permitted Wildlife Rehabber

## Our Mission

The Raptor Center of Tampa Bay is a non-profit organization that is building a wildlife rehabilitation facility in Hillsborough County, FL with a focus on birds of prey where we can rescue, treat, and rehabilitate them with a goal of release back into the wild.

We provide teaching and guidance to the general public about conservation issues and increase public awareness of wildlife.

## About us

We are a state and federally permitted facility. We are a rehabber, rescuers and volunteers. We strive to rehabilitate birds of prey and give them the best possible chance for survival when we return them back in the wild.



## Values

- **Rehabilitation and release native Florida Wildlife back to the wild:**  
Advocate for the Raptor Center of Tampa Bay to acquire land, build a center and become a locally known and treasured entity.
- **Collaboration:**  
Develop and foster effective partnerships with our donors, members, volunteers, Government Resources and other organizations that support our mission.
- **Diversity, Equity & Inclusion:**  
Deliver conservation programming that serve people of all ages, abilities, cultures and incomes.
- **Financial Security:**  
Secure Financial Resources to support our Center Goals and to help maintain and build the Center.
- **Inspiration:**  
Lift every person's spirits, touch their hearts and engage their minds through all our endeavors whether that be rescuing a sick, orphaned or wounded bird or delivering conservation education programs, festivals and workshops.
- **Stewardship** Manage the resources entrusted to us to ensure the conservation and preservation of the nature environment and make our centers place on the planet better because we are here.







# Position Statements

## Rehabilitate

We work for continual improvement of our rehabilitation efforts. We strive to rescue, rehabilitate, recondition native Florida wildlife professionally always with the goal of releasing it back to the wild.

## Grow

We seek ways to find funding to increase our ability to serve our wildlife in a state of the art facility. We need to grow our membership, community connections, and financial supporters to ensure that the Raptor Center can become a premier destination for sick, injured and orphaned wildlife as well as provide an open air classroom and educational programs to enhance peoples understanding of the natural world and its importance.

## Conservation Education

We provide fun and relevant educational programs, information and experiences for everyone that we interact with always with a focus on conservation education and environmental stewardship.

## Engage

We communicate and interact effectively to provide our volunteers and people that call for a wildlife rescue a lasting, meaningful relationship with the Raptor Center using a variety of engagement ideas, activities, programs and workshops.

## Advocate

We are champions for and advocate the building of a wildlife center to nurture our precious wildlife and advance conservation education in our area. We will be an outstanding community citizen that not only rehabilitates wildlife but also provides for the enjoyment and education of residents and tourists alike.





## Here are some of the ways YOU can help the birds!

### RESCUE AND CARE:

- Respond promptly to rescue calls and locate, safely capture and secure the injured bird using the appropriate gear
- Clean crates and mews (larger enclosures) and deliver food and water while injured birds are inside
- Hold birds securely and/or assist rehabilitator during treatment
- Transport birds to RCTB or other locations as needed

### CARE ASSISTANCE:

- Food preparation
- Laundry
- Pressure washing treatment and transport crates
- Washing food and water bowls
- Inventory management: medical, food, and general supplies



***Not sure you want to work directly with birds? There are many roles that are critical to our success!***

### ADMINISTRATIVE:

- Data Entry: maintain accurate records for state and federal reporting
- Social Media: monitor and provide content for FaceBook, Instagram and our website
- Fundraising & Events: lead or assist on our major fundraising and education events, and work with the community to create and strengthen revenue opportunities
- Grant Writing

### EDUCATION:

Summer Camps: managing registrations, preparing materials, assisting



camp leader

Education Materials Management: update and organize leaders' guides and link with all supporting materials. Research new content, models and activities

- Ambassador: promote RCTB at festivals and large events by interacting with the public on our work and the birds we serve

*Internships coming soon for many of our roles!*

# Strategic Initiatives

## Obtain Land before 12/31/2022

2-8 acres of land should be donated, acquired or bought prior to December 31, 2022. Establish plans and raise funds to build a welcome center, clinic and rehabilitation and flight cages. This will include an outdoor open-air classroom for programs and workshops.

## Rescue and Care

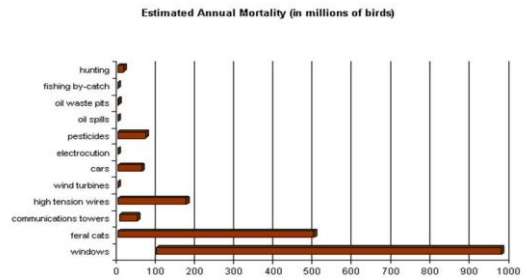
### What Causes Wild Birds to Need To Be Rescued?

- Babies (nestlings) and juveniles (fledglings) falling out of nests
- Collisions with cars
- Loss of nesting and foraging habitat reducing hunting grounds resulting in starvation
- Weak ever since hatch ends up a poor hunter which results in starvation
- Collisions with power lines
- Electrocutation
- Gunshot wounds
- Shot with an arrow that is still imbedded
- Wrapped up in fishing line and/or fishing lures through wings, mouth and feet
- Running into a screen enclosure or house chasing a bird
- Burnt from fire
- Grommets or other objects stuck on cranes beak
- Various materials stuck on Anhinga's beaks
- Attacked by dogs and cats
- Migration exhaustion
- Running into reflective glass on buildings
- Falling into a sewage treatment plant sludge tank
- Feather damage from flying over power plant heat stacks
- Standing on a methane burner in a land fill when it fires off
- Infectious disease such as West Nile, Avian Pox and Aspergillosis



- Falling into a clay settling area in a mine
- Falling into a vat of grease left uncovered at a restaurant
- Poisonings, including rats and other animals that have been poisoned
- Stuck in a building
- Lead poisoning
- Glue Traps
- Struck by lightening
- Lightning arrester spikes
- Humans - cut feathers, kept in wrong cage, imprint (kidnapped)
- Food borne illness such as Botulism
- Parasites - internal and external
- Stuck in a fireplace
- Stuck in a barbed wire fence
- Territorial disputes and aggression
- Running into or being hung up on a cell tower
- Trapped in an attic
- Hurricanes and other severe storms

Unknown - many times we just don't know what caused the birds injury



## Equipment List

Basic Equipment every rescue volunteer should carry:

**FWC Permit** - You should have a permit from the Florida Wildlife Conservation Commission to transport or possess wildlife for 24 hours. Although there is a Good Samaritan Law that allows people to transport wildlife we do this on a regular basis therefore you need a permit. This also means that your name and phone number will be listed on the FWC website for who to call for injured wildlife and you may get calls directly. You should notify or refer those calls to the Rescue Coordinator prior to responding to the call each and every time. If the call is for a mammal, use the decision tree found in this manual and the phone list in the Appendix to refer the caller to someone who can help the animal they have.

**Net** - Large enough to catch an osprey. A large net used to land fish with a retractable handle is ideal. (\$18.00 about fishing dept.) It is also a good idea to carry a small net, like a butterfly net for songbirds, kestrels and screech owls.

**Gloves** - The thickness of the gloves depends on the species of bird you are rescuing. Suede gloves for everything up to a red-shoulder can be effective. (Gloves are supplied by us, beginning 11/1/16. These can also be purchased at Lowes or Home Depot.) For eagles, red-tails and large owls, we do recommend shoulder-high Kevlar animal handling gloves. (These can be purchased on-line and run \$20.00-150.00 and are not supplied by RCTB.)  
**Carrier or Box** - For either, the bottom should be covered with newspaper and a towel to prevent the bird from sliding around during transport. If using a carrier, once the bird is inside it should be completely covered with a towel to help calm them down. If using a box, it must have multiple small holes to allow air to flow through the box. The top should be folded by closing flap 1, then 2, then 3, then 4 then pull the flap of 1 up over 4 to interlock and seal the box. If there is a gap do not tape over the gap as the birds feathers can get stuck to the tape. Just tape the flaps down. If placing a vulture in a box, tape it up



as best you can, they have been known to break out of cardboard boxes if left alone. Boxes have an advantage over crates in that you can fold them flat and carrier a roll of tape and it takes up a lot less room in your car and you can leave the bird in it wherever it needs to go and we are not out of a crate.

**Safety glasses** especially important with water birds. All water birds will try and stab you in the face. Cranes included. Safety glasses are supplied by TBRR.

**Optional but helpful tips / items:**

- Wear closed-toe shoes
- Waterproof boots or goulashes are helpful
- Insect repellent
- Water to drink
- Hat or sunscreen
- Good diagonal cutters to cut fish hooks
- Small scissors (like fingernail) to cut fishing line
- Bed Sheet for Cranes
- Mesh laundry bag for Cranes
- Snare (if you know how to use one) for long-legged birds
- Cast Nest (if you know how to use one)
- A large lawn bag (for bodies if bird is deceased)

*Don't ever cram a bird in a crate that is too small. You can damage their feathers. Feather quality is critical to survival and they only get new ones once a year.*

**Safety Tips**

- Safety is always our first priority
- Don't climb trees without ladders
- Don't stand on chairs or buckets trying to reach a bird
- Don't go into the water at night
- Don't trespass onto land without the owner's permission
- Wear your gloves and safety glasses
- Rescue with a partner
- Don't go up to unlit houses in the dark
- Call the person who reported the injured bird before you go
- Don't stand in the street and be mindful of traffic
- Don't rescue on the interstate without sheriff or police assistance
- Watch out for power lines and poles
- Look down and not just up - watch out for holes in the ground
- Don't go down onto rocks covered in oysters
- Don't lift anything too heavy for you
- Don't go into the water to rescue a bird without someone else on land to assist
- Don't chase birds if you are physically challenged

*"As a large land holding entity in central Florida with a strong commitment to wildlife stewardship, we regularly seek the expert guidance and assistance from the Raptor Center of Tampa Bay to assist us with raptor rescues. The staff is extremely knowledgeable, efficient, and always able and eager to help. We feel extremely fortunate to be able to call upon the Raptor Center of Tampa Bay."*

*William Brammell  
Mosaic*

- Don't do anything that you feel uncomfortable doing
- Call FWC 888-404-3922 if you witness people abusing or shooting birds
- Don't grab fishing hooks without tools
- Don't let a large raptor grab you with their feet
- Don't text and drive

## Birds of Prey We Rescue - Rescue Notes

1. **Bald or Golden Eagles** - Eagles are the largest bird of prey that we have in Florida. In order to rescue a Bald Eagle you should be experienced handling them. We advocate always, if possible, having two people present at the rescue. We also request that if you receive a call for an eagle directly, immediately contact the center (813-205-1851). Eagles can run like vultures, especially juveniles. They bite and if they grab you with their feet, they have 350-500 pounds per square inch (PSI) gripping strength in each foot. If grabbed would you will need a second person to pull their talons out of you. Bald eagles can severely harm you or in a freak situation they can kill you. We work with the Audubon Center for Birds of Prey when it comes to eagles. Unless you are experienced, please do not try to rescue one alone!



2. **Osprey** - Osprey, or fish hawks, only eat fish. Their talons are very long, curved and sharp. Because



osprey can virtually hover over the water looking for fish, their eye sight as well as their wing structure and its strength are critical to their survival. As Osprey began to fledge, we pick up a lot of juveniles, especially in Pinellas County. These birds are not hard to rescue. They will typically fall over on their back and display their feet. That is your opportunity to grab them. If an osprey has a broken wing there is rarely an instance when we can save it. They are a bird that does not like to be in captivity so an unfixable (non-releasable)

Osprey is rarely going to be a candidate for placement.

3. **Red-tailed Hawks** - A large female red-tail can be as big as a small male eagle. They are very likely to try and grab you no matter how bad of shape they are in. They have big strong feet and long talons. Like Osprey and Eagles, these birds require a larger carrier. The Red-tailed Hawks that we rescue are typically very badly injured. These are birds that if non-releasable, sometimes if they are young they can be placed. These hawks are smart. When pursued they can hide



masterfully. They will run from you and given the chance will tuck themselves up under bushes and stay perfectly still making it difficult to see them. Don't give up the rescue, keep looking! They are camouflaged well. Use caution when picking up a Red-tailed Hawk. If they foot you (grab you with their feet), most like you will need another person to help get the bird off of you.

4. **Red-shouldered Hawks** - smaller hawk which are the most common and plentiful hawk in this area. In Hillsborough County we rescue more red shouldered hawks than any other type of raptor. Red Shouldered Hawks are aggressive and quick. They will grab you or bite you any chance they get, if they feel well enough. They can be strong and depending on what gloves you use they can put their talons straight through them into your hands. Be careful! Once you have rescued a few of them you will see they really are not hard to get. It's good to use your big net. They can go in a medium-small sized carrier. They can benefit from a tail-guard.



5. **Barred Owls** - Most frequently found in areas near water, rescues can be tricky. Barred Owls tend to come from more rural areas. They are hit by cars a lot and are found just standing on the side of the road out in the country. We have experienced a lot of eye injuries with these owls. They are not a hard bird to rescue. They can grab you with their feet and if given the chance will bite you. When found as babies, as long as they are healthy, can be re-nested in the cavity where they hatched or in a Barred Owl nest box.



6. **Great Horned Owls** - The flying tiger! They are the strongest bird of prey with 500 lbs. psi gripping strength in their feet. Their talons are shorter than an eagle and less curved. When we get calls on them they typically are not a hard rescue. The thing to remember with a Great Horned Owl is under NO circumstances let them grab you with their feet. They are much smaller than a bald eagle but make no mistake, their talons will go straight through your glove, your hand or fingers. Until you are comfortable handling raptors, these are best left to experienced rescuers.



7. **Eastern Screech Owls** - Small with very sharp talons and an amazingly strong grip for such a little bird. They can be very feisty. Like all



owls, the screech owls click their beaks a lot. This is a sign they are upset. When you rescue them you actually want to hear that! When you pick up a screech, use a smaller net if possible. Frequently you will not need a net. Injured and sick screech owls tend to sit in one place with their eyes closed. Birds that don't open their eyes when you touch them, rarely survive. Frequently you can put a towel around them and pick them up. Small as they are wear gloves or you may be bleeding from little pin pricks where you had to pull their talons off your hand!

8. **American Kestrels** - The smallest falcon in North America and likely the only falcon that you will rescue in this area although Peregrine Falcons migrate through here in the spring and fall. Crested Caracara, found south and east of Hillsborough County are also considered a falcon.



Like screech owls, kestrels are small but still can grab you and bite. They do not hurt as badly as a screech owl and all other larger birds of prey but they will draw blood. Their beak is sharp and is designed in such a way that allows them to break the necks of small birds and animals, killing them quickly. If they bite you, or grab you and you are not wearing gloves, it's going to hurt. They have small legs and are delicate birds. Use care when rescuing them and do not exert any force on their legs or wings, they can break. Use a smaller net if you have one. Kestrels become imprinted quickly. If you pick up a baby kestrel minimize contact with it. When we feed baby kestrels we feed them with a mirror in a camo tent so they cannot see us. This is important. They can become imprinted, when they are small almost instantly.

9. **Cooper's Hawks** - These birds are very high strung and act well . . . typically crazy! We get them out of pool cages and calls for them in buildings. When they are in a building we refer the company (they are usually in warehouses) to a falconer in the area who can legally trap them. Refer any call for a hawk in a building to your coordinator. Cooper's Hawks are smaller than Red Shouldered Hawks. They are extremely fast moving birds. When they are healthy a Cooper's Hawk can fly low and run through brush after other birds. Their diet is lots of birds and some small mammals. These birds tend to get themselves into all kinds of trouble. If they get the opportunity, they *will* grab you. They are difficult to manage in captivity. They can have problems in crates. They have long tails



and should be transported with a tail guard. If a tail guard is not available, put a towel or pillow case on the inside of the crate door to minimize damage to the tail during transport. A bird that gets

damaged feathers may have to wait until it molts to be released. Remember that can be up to a year increasing the cost of rehabilitating the bird exponentially.

10. **Swallow-tailed or Mississippi Kites** - Swallow-tailed kites are delicate birds. Their feet seem more like a parrots. They are small. Mississippi Kites are not common in this area. Rescue of either of these



types of kites requires expertise. Like some other birds of prey, they are not difficult to catch and pick up. The Swallow-tailed Kite has an extremely long and delicate tail. A tail guard should be put on the bird prior to transport.



Currently we take Swallow-tailed Kites to The Avian Reconditioning Center in Apopka Florida.

11. **Burrowing Owls** - Once common through-out this area they have all but vanished. There is a small



colony at MacDill AFB and some up on Power Line Road. The rest are on private lands and many are monitored by environmental consultants for companies like Mosaic. These are small owls that are easy to rescue if away from the burrow although it is rare and uncommon to see them in our area. That being said the one



we have rescued came from Westshore Plaza in Tampa. They can be captured with either net. If they are near a burrow try and get them before they run down the hole. If they do run down in a burrow, call for help.

12. **Black Vultures** - They are extremely smart birds. They can run like lightning! Vultures are easier to rescue with 2 or 3 people. They can live on the ground injured for a long time. The longer they have been on the ground, the worse their lice are. A spritz of Adams flea Spray is helpful to kill them right away (be careful not to get in their eyes, nose or mouth). They run down in swampy areas and hide and you can easily lose track of them. It's not uncommon for us to have to go back twice to rescue one. Some (not all) vultures throw up as a defense mechanism. As you could well image, if they do the smell is awful. Vultures bite. They do not grab you with their feet but they will bite you given the chance. Get a hold of their head, as you were trained and don't hold them where they can reach your face! The hardest part of a vulture rescue is running them down. With a broken wing they will still jump 4-6 feet over fences if you let them. If you put them in a box, tape it up extremely well. They have been known to break out of cardboard boxes. A note on baby vultures. If you pick up a white fuzzy baby vulture, you must minimize any contact with them. These birds become imprinted quickly.

**13. Turkey Vultures** - They are big birds! Bigger than a black vulture they can be about the size of an eagle. Rescuing them is the same as a black vulture. We don't rescue as many Turkey Vultures as we do Black Vultures. These birds are migratory and do not usually breed here so we have not rescued any baby Turkey Vultures to date. Vultures & Crested Caracara can be extremely difficult to catch even when they are hurt badly. They can run 8-10 mph. You must have a net and be in good physical shape to go after them. ***If you have any type of disability that would put you at risk running after a bird that can out run you, out jump you and requires extra physical endurance, vultures or caracara should not be on your list of birds to rescue!***



**14. Barn Owls** - They are a rarer owl in our area. At one time, these were the most common owl found though-out the world. Today their numbers have diminished as are their habitat and desired breeding locations, old Water Oaks, hollows of dead trees and of course in old barns, they are torn down. These owls are not a hard bird to rescue. They can grab you with their feet and if given the chance will bite you. Most calls for rescues are for old trees being cut down and they find babies inside.



**15. Rarer birds** - in this area you may rescue are Peregrine Falcons (see Cooper's Hawk instructions) , Merlins (Kestrel Instructions) , Crested Caracara are harder to rescue than a vulture and always require more than one person, preferable 3-4 people to catch them. Golden Eagles (Bald Eagle Instructions), Sharp-shinned Hawks (Coopers), Northern Harriers or Snail Kites can come through this area although we have never rescued either.



**Other Rescued Birds**

We will rescue any native bird that we receive a call for. Several of our team members can assist you with these types of birds:

Sandhill Cranes - Call the center for assistance.

Songbirds - Since songbirds are easy to pick up and rarely can hurt you we try and encourage people to bring the birds directly to us or to Blue Pearl in Brandon. If you catch them with a net, use a small net like a butterfly net.

Waterbirds- Are aggressive and can stab you in the face. Always wear your safety glasses rescuing or handling them. Keep them at least 18 inches away from your face.

## **Baby Birds**

Not all baby birds are raised in a nest (altricial), some birds like killdeer and Sandhill Cranes, are ready to take on the world the day they are born (precocial). First determine if the bird belongs in a nest. Look carefully around the area for parent birds. Watch them and where they fly and this will help you determine where the nest is. Frequently they will come down and feed the baby.

Here are your clues:

### **Featherless**

If the bird has no feathers it's either a Hatchling, right out of the egg, or a Nestling, still needing to be in the nest. If it is put back in the nest or a make shift nest and the parents don't return in a short period of time, it will need to go come in or go to our closest participating Veterinary Clinic. Please keep it warm. (You can plug in a heating pad in your car and put it under the box, making sure they do not get too warm either. If you don't have a heating pad you can put them down your shirt next to your body to keep them warm on the way to The Raptor Center or a veterinary clinic.)

### **Fledgling**

If it is fully feathered and can perch, hop and fly short distances, it is learning to fly under the watchful eye of its parents. It is on the ground for a reason, so please do not "rescue" it unless it is in danger from a neighborhood cat or other predator. In this case, place the baby bird on a branch for safety near to where you found it. It is a falsehood that a mother bird will not take care of young if they have been touched by humans. They will be grateful for your help as they can't pick them up!

### **Kidnapping**

Do not take baby birds from their parents. They need them to teach them how to survive and learn to find food. They have to have these skills in order to survive. They need to know how to fly, we can't teach them that as well as their parents can. They need to know what food to eat, how to find food and how to avoid predators. Their parents are best to teach them that. So please do not rescue them unless they really are in danger. Place them up on a branch for safety if in danger from predators.

### **The Raptor Center or Veterinarian**

If a baby is sick, injured or has been in a cat or dog's mouth they will need medical attention. Please keep them warm on transport to The Raptor Center or one of our approved wildlife veterinary clinics.

## **The Law**

Under the Federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act it is illegal to take native wildlife from the wild. However, there is a Good Samaritan Clause that allows citizens to pick up and transport injured or sick wildlife to a licensed rehabilitation facility or veterinary clinic within 24 hours of picking them up. It is difficult to rehabilitate baby birds even by the most skilled and experienced rehabbers.

***If the bird is not injured every attempt should be made to leave it to the care of its parents.***



## Transporting Birds

*The crate or box needs to be the right size for the bird.* If you cram a bird into a crate that is too small and damage its feathers, you put the bird at risk for long term rehabilitation that was in the beginning not needed. This is hard on the bird and increases the cost to rehab the bird greatly. You also do not want the container to be too big. Putting a screech owl or songbird in a shoebox is fine, putting them in a 14 inch cube is not! If the box is too big the bird can move around a lot and get injured in transport.



*It is important that every container have adequate ventilation that allows the bird to get enough oxygen and to be cool.* Boxes must have numerous holes but work nicely as you don't have to worry about the tail and primary feathers as much. If you drill holes into a plastic container make sure to remove anything from inside and don't forget to put newspaper and a towel on the bottom to keep the bird from slipping around during transport.

*Large birds in boxes must be secured.* A Black Vulture can get out of a box if you don't tape the top up. Secure the top and bottom well. A large bird, like an eagle can fall out of the bottom of the box too. Check both sides carefully BEFORE putting the bird in it.

*Feather quality of utmost importance for all birds to be able to fly correctly.* Once you have netted or picked up the rescued bird it is important that you do not grab it by the wings or tail. A tail is a bird's rudder. It is what allows a bird to steer. Without a tail, a bird cannot break or steer correctly. Think about being in your car. If you cannot turn or steer what happens? You crash! Same thing with a bird. Pay attention to what you put them in to minimize damage to their feathers.

*It is important to protect their tail.* Tail Guards are typically made of old x-ray film. They are cut to size and taped onto the bird's body. Care must be taken not to cover their vent. Before you try installing a tail guard, please be sure you are trained. Instead of a tail guard you can take a towel and put it on the inside of the door so their feathers can't stick through the holes in the door. When transporting a pelican ALWAYS put the towel on the inside of the crate door. Pelicans have a tip on the end of their beak that can fracture if it gets stuck on the door. They can also stick the end of their long beak right through a small hole in a crate and they are amazingly accurate. Don't put your face or allow others to put their face near their beak.

*Don't get caught up with the cell phone camera.* Pictures of rescues are encouraged if it is convenient to take one. You are there to rescue the bird. If you are not concentrating on what you are doing you can get hurt or you can hurt the bird worse.

*Never transport a bird in a crate in the back of an open pickup truck.* The wind is too much for a bird that is already injured or sick.

*Never transport or keep a bird in a wire dog or rabbit cage.* Their feathers will get damaged.

*Wrap a bird with a broken wing or leg in a towel* if you do not know how to or do not have the right stuff to wrap the fracture. Broken wings or legs that are fixable can become compound fractures that are not fixable if the bird is allowed to thrash around in the container.

*Paperwork must accompany every bird.* Get in the habit of taking forms with you. You can have the person who called fill it out while you are getting the bird and putting it away in your car. If the bird needs to go to Busch Gardens (Broken wings or legs) you must also fill out a Busch Gardens form. (This must be pre-arranged by Nancy Murrah.)

*Vehicle logs should be completed for every transport.* They should be turned in at the end of each month or quarter (Due April 1, July 1, Oct 1 and Jan.1) to the secretary.

## Release Tips

You have two primary objectives when releasing a bird. Looking at it from the birds perspective make sure:

1. It is safe immediately around the release point.
2. The existing food supply is suitable for and accessible to the particular species of bird that you are releasing.



**We always try to return the birds to the general area where they were picked up.**

This gives the bird a better chance since this is where nature intended it to be. If it is returned home the food supply should be adequate unless the landscape has changed since rescue.

### Is the area free of potential hazards?

- Is there traffic?
- Are you far enough away from the road?
- Is it free of fences?
- Is it free of livestock such as cattle?
- Is the habitat right?
- Is it free of power lines in immediate release area?
- Is the bird going to immediately be over water?

### Is the bird physically okay?

Birds can get injured in transport. It does not happen often but it does happen. Make sure no feathers or wings were damaged in the box. Remove the bird from the container as long as you can safely, and give it a quick look over before you let it go. Check it's legs to make sure any identifying bands or tie wraps were removed. If not, remove them prior to release. If the bird is injured return it to your coordinator or the designated person quickly for treatment.



### Is the habitat right?

Examples: Kestrels need to be in a habitat where lots of small mammals and invertebrates are. You should look at the type of terrain, grass height, access to insects and small mammals. Tree cover and the type of trees that are around.

When releasing a Bald Eagle it must be near a large body of water such as Tampa Bay, The

Gulf of Mexico or one of the main rivers that flow through the area. A readily available food supply will encourage raptors to stay in the release area for at least a few days.

Although you want to release eagles and osprey near water you don't want their first flight to be straight out over water. If there is any problem at release you won't be able to retrieve them easily if they are out in the water.

If a bird has been shot, it will not be returned back to the same area. Although all shootings are reported to FWC rarely if ever is there enough evidence for an arrest or conviction.

### **Is there a sufficient prey base?**

A juvenile needs a prey base 4 times greater than that required by an adult in order to find it and catch it until they become proficient hunters. To give you an example, an adult Cooper's Hawk might find a vulnerable prey from a flock of 25 birds, while a juvenile might need 100 birds to be able to catch just 1.

Birds of prey will move from area to area usually staying in one location only as long as the habitat can support a large prey base.

### **Is it the right time of day?**

*Diurnal birds* should be released during daylight hours, preferably before noon, to give them plenty of time to get adjusted to their surroundings and find a place to roost.

*Nocturnal birds*, such as owls, should be released after the sun drops below the horizon. This helps minimize songbirds attacking them. Screech owls should never be released before sundown as they can get hurt from jays and crows who will relentlessly peck at them.

Ask yourself:

- Are you in the general area where the bird was picked up?
  - If the bird was shot it will be not be released where it came from. It will be moved to the right habitat.
- Is the area free of potential hazards?
- Is the bird physically okay?
- Is the habitat right?
- Is there sufficient prey base?
- Is it the right time of day?



### **How do I actually release the bird?**

For larger raptors we give them a toss in the air. You can take them out of the box, look them over then if you can set them down on your hand or put them on the ground and let them go. You can also open the box and let them fly out of the box.



What you don't want to do is bang on the crate, become impatient or dump them out of any container. These are wild birds and they deserve respect and patience. Think of what they have been through. Being a little afraid is certainly understandable.

We like pictures! If you get a picture of them upon release many times you will see them looking back at you in disbelief as if to say "Wow! They let me go!" Please post your release pictures on the Raptor Center of Tampa Bay's page and share from there.

Releasing birds back to the wild in the best physical and mental condition and in the best place is why we all do what we do!

## Communication Tower Protocol

Cell towers are private property and contain essential equipment to allow communication of cell phones. It is essential that you never enter into the fenced area at the base of any tower if there is an injured bird inside the fenced in area. Only employees of the tower owner can do this. Get the tower number and telephone numbers off of the gate and contact your coordinator. Cell towers are so tall that if a bird falls out of the nest, they usually will fall outside of this space.

If there is a bird hung up on the tower, the same rules apply. Under no circumstances should you ever attempt to climb a communication tower.

It is critical that you obey posted NO TRASPASSING signs on towers and private land. Entering into these areas is against the law and it is absolutely essential that you do not make any attempt to do this under any circumstances. If you feel something is wrong, contact your rescue coordinator first. You can always call FWC Wildlife Alert at 888-404-3922.

## Administrative

### Meet our Board of Directors

#### Nancy Murrah – President

Nancy Murrah spent many years as the Director of Learning for the one of the largest insurance companies in America. Today she dedicates her life to rehabilitating wildlife, especially birds of prey. Always while exploring, learning and growing others knowledge of wildlife she teaches the importance of conserving wild lands and clean water for animals and people alike. She is currently a Federally and State Permitted Wildlife Rehabilitator and the President of The Raptor Center of Tampa Bay where, in addition to many duties, she designs and delivers Nature Programs.



A native of Tampa Florida she has spent the great majority of her life outside learning about nature. She is a local writer of children's stories, facilitator, photographer and illustrator. Nancy has written stories for both education and entertainment. Her stories include Tilly the Gopher Tortoise, The Eagles' Forest, Paige Eagle Ambassador and Ollie the Alligator. Most of the illustrations in the programs were also drawn by Nancy.

She serves as a citizen scientist for EagleWatch, an Audubon Florida program, she is on the board of directors for Tampa Audubon, Volunteers for both JayWatch and ColonyWatch projects, as well as participating in the Christmas Bird Count, Migratory Bird Count, Hawk Watch in the keys when she can and The Great Backyard Bird Count. Nancy spends the vast majority of her time rescuing and rehabilitating raptors and is building a Bird of Prey Rehabilitation Center in Riverview, FL



### **Kat Harnest – Volunteer Coordinator**

Kat is a Florida Master Naturalist, as well as being certified in Kayak instruction for people with disabilities. She keeps track of all our volunteers and their related documents! She works for American Hero Construction and has been instrumental in helping us work to get the center ready for patients to move in.

Kat also has recently taken on the responsibility of making sure all permits are properly executed.



### **Kim Rexroat – Director of Merchandising**

With her eye on the money Kim has been a dedicated volunteer for over two years. Kim has individually held the most successful individual fundraising efforts. Every week Kim has come helped clean cages, fill water bowls and feed the birds in rehabilitation. She has driven over 11,000 miles, this year alone to help us help the birds. Kim oversees merchandise sales.

### **Ed Karlander – Director**

Ed is our financial conscience. Ed helps us with the center, rescue, finances, and so much more!



### **Jenn Graff – FaceBook and Instagram Manager**

Jenn has boosted our followers and helped guide us in our social media platforms. With a background in radio, Jenn has media experience we need to continue to increase our followers on all social media platforms.

Check out our FaceBook and Instagram pages. You can go to our **[volunteer page](#)** now to meet more of our volunteers.



### **Expectations**

- As a volunteer of The Raptor Center of Tampa Bay you are required to know the contents of this handbook. You must complete a Volunteer Application and sign the Volunteer Agreement and Liability Waiver. If you are going to transport birds you will need to apply for a FWC transport permit. This is a volunteer position and there is no compensation or reimbursement for your rescue gear, vehicle or gasoline expenses, unless

pre-arranged. Once you have been trained we will supply you with gloves, safety glasses, towels, crates and other basic supplies needed to rescue.

- The people who volunteer with us do so out of their love of birds and desire to make a difference. We hope that is why you have joined us. Rescuing and returning wild birds is a rewarding experience. A note of warning, it can also be addictive!
- Coordinate all rescues with the center.
- That you are loyal to our group and our cause.
- That you are honest in all your dealings.
- Follow safety tips.

## Internet and Social Media

Webpage: <http://www.raptorcenteroftampa.org/>

Face Book: <https://www.facebook.com/RaptorCenterofTampaBay>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/raptorcenterof/>

We ask that you post pictures of rescues/releases directly onto the Raptor Center of Tampa Bay's Face Book page *first* then share it with your friends from there. That draws more people to our page. We are a non-profit organization that exists on donations. We want to drive traffic to all our internet sites because that's one of the key ways that we market ourselves.

"As a large land holding entity in central Florida with a strong commitment to wildlife stewardship, we regularly seek the expert guidance and assistance from the Raptor Center of Tampa Bay to assist us with raptor rescues. The staff is extremely knowledgeable, efficient, and always able and eager to help. We feel extremely fortunate to be able to call upon the Raptor Center of Tampa Bay."

William Brammell

Mosaic

## Where are we going?

### Why Us?

Established a new corporation to build the center.

Facilitated 10 education programs focused on conservation education with over 300 participants during 2019.

Successfully released over 900 birds since 2016.

Fostered relationships with Hillsborough County Parks and Recreation.

TECO - Wildlife rescue partner with all operations in Hillsborough and Polk County.

Mosaic - We rescue on Mosaic lands every time we are called. This includes calls in Hardee County where they are currently mining.

Rehabilitated and released hundreds of birds.

Established partnerships with other wildlife rehabilitators such as: All Birds, Rescue, Rehab and Release, Audubon Center for Birds of Prey, Back to Nature Birds, Avian Reconditioning Center, Creature Safe Place, C.R.O.W., Owl's Nest Sanctuary

for Wildlife , Save Our Seabirds, Seaside Seabird Sanctuary, Swamp Girl Adventures and others. This allows us to find the best solution for whatever bird or animal that we rescue.

As a state and federally permitted facility people bring us everything from baby squirrels to Bald Eagles! We find a solution for everyone!

### **Our Successes:**

Established a new corporation to build the center in 2018.

Fostered relationships with Hillsborough County Parks and Recreation.

Partner with TECO for Wildlife rescue and avian compliance with all operations in Hillsborough and Polk County. They have provided numerous volunteer hours at the center.

Mosaic - We rescue on Mosaic lands every time we are called. This includes calls in Hardee County where they are currently mining.

Rehabilitated and released thousands of birds.

Established partnerships with other wildlife rehabilitators such as: All Birds Rescue, Rehab and Release Birds in Helping Hands, Audubon Center for Birds of Prey, C.R.O.W., Seaside Seabird, Save Our Seabirds, Creature Safe Place, Back to Nature, Save All Birds, Swamp Girl Adventures, Critter Creek Wildlife, and others (see transport map). This allows us to find the best solution for whatever bird or animal that we rescue. As a state and federally permitted facility people bring us everything from baby squirrels to Bald Eagles! We find a solution for everyone!

### **Market Analysis**

The need for a local rehabilitation is great. Florida is in a constant state of change and growth. The Greater Tampa Bay area, has over 3.7 million residents, This generally includes the entire Tampa bay area which continues to develop at a rapid pace. Urban and suburban growth is resulting in an increasing number of birds and animals being injured and/or pushed out of their habitats. The growth in human population, combined with changes in land usage, are the main cause for wildlife displacement, illness, and injury. Many species find themselves adjusting to new environments including the urban landscape and suburban farmlands, all which seem to bring a new set of challenges for wildlife. Many animals are forced to forage in or near communities exposing them to many dangers, including: collision with vehicles or structures, electrocution, fishing line entanglement, illegal shooting, attacks by domestic animals, oil spills and secondary poisoning through pesticides.

As USFWS states on their web site "Both natural and human-caused sources of bird mortality contribute cumulative or combined effects to declining bird populations. Millions of acres of bird [habitat are lost or degraded](#) every year due to development, agriculture, and forestry practices. These rapidly accelerating impacts can be mitigated only through habitat restoration and protection. In addition, millions of birds are directly killed by human-caused sources such as [collisions with man-made structures](#). Death from natural causes is also a common source of mortality.

Natural and human-caused mortality impacts are exacerbated by the landscape alterations resulting from a changing climate. Birds in every habitat will be affected by natural and human-caused sources, so conserving migratory bird populations requires a multi-faceted, coordinated approach by governments, conservation organizations, industry, and the general public."

Our numbers mirror the statistics:

Our leading causes of need for rehabilitation are Window Strikes or Collisions with something: a building, a car, a communication tower.

Because we do birds of prey collisions with power lines are common.

And then there is always "the neighborhood cat."

## Values

- *Honesty* - We are honest in all our dealings
- *Integrity* - We are pleasant to deal with on all levels.
- *The birds come first* - We always have the best interests of the birds at heart.
- *Respect* - We are always kind, respectful and courteous to others and all wildlife.
- *Education* - We educate the public every opportunity we get on how to help with avian and land conservation. We continue to educate ourselves on how to do what we do better.
- *The law* - We follow the laws of the land.

## Statics

2016

- We rescued 629 birds and no mammals. We were strictly a rescue organization.

2017

- We rescued 857 birds Our volunteers logged approximately 115,000 miles driving on rescues. We obtained our own rehabilitation permit, both state and federal, in late September 2017. We rehabbed 94 of the birds ourselves from 10/1-12/31.

2018

- We rescued 629 birds and 267 mammals. We transferred 294 birds and 184 mammals to other facilities to complete the rehab / raising process as we currently do not have adequate caging to carry out rehab from start to finish.

2019

- We rescued 669 birds and 191 mammals or reptiles. We transferred 188 of them to other facilities. Of the birds we kept here we released 45% of them back into the wild

2020

- We rescued 567 birds and 304 mammals, reptiles or exotics

2021

- We rescued 593 birds and 393 mammals, reptiles or exotics

## Company Description

The Raptor Center of Tampa Bay rescues, raises, rehabilitates, and releases hundreds of wild, native birds of prey annually across the Hillsborough, Manatee, Pasco, Pinellas and Polk Counties of Florida. In addition, we provide transportation and facilitate solutions for non-bird of prey species; deploy rapid response teams to treat and transport to the best facility for the species; host environmental/nature education events for the general public, including children's programs; and, work in conjunction with utility companies and other corporations to provide solutions for avian conflicts to reduce mortality.

Although we are a small organization, our operations are extensive. Long before our official establishment in 2018 as a 501 (c)(3), The Raptor Center of Tampa Bay has played an outsized role in local efforts to meet the enormous (and growing) need to rescue, rehabilitate, and release injured and sick birds of prey. The Center's tireless leadership, with the invaluable help of its dedicated volunteers, has long been committed to this mission doing so very much over the years for injured and sick birds, with so very little. Throughout that time and even today, a small group of rescuers and rehabilitators have selflessly depleted their own financial resources, used their homes as makeshift clinics and holding pens, transported birds in their personal automobiles. They did so, while simultaneously reaching out to educate the community, collaborate with local authorities, and attract volunteers and donors, so that they can continue to respond to the community's calls for help on behalf of injured or sick birds. As the calls for help multiplied, it became clear the only way effectively to address the need in the long term was to come together formally in 2018 as a nonprofit organization dedicated to building and operating the Tampa Bay area's first raptor rehabilitation facility.

## Programs: How we generate revenue, earn profits and cover our expenses

Our center is funded by private and corporate donations and grants.

Additionally we:

- Charge admission to general public to Festivals
- Charge admission for special events
- Offer on-going educational workshops to both public and private schools as well as home-schools and virtual-schools
- Offer educational workshops to local rehabbers and their volunteers
- Maintain a virtual small gift shop with gifts that feature the birds of prey
- Establish 3 major fundraising events annually to generate operational capital
  - Wonders of Wildlife Festival
  - Holiday Dinner, Art and Photo Auction December
  - Raptor Ball October
- Holiday Art and Photo Auction, Dinner and Wingspan Raffle



- Offer Summer Camps centered around wildlife
- Partner with local schools and libraries to offer a Harry Potter Birthday Party on July 31 each year.

Additionally we will have:

- Merchandise Sales - Bird of Prey merchandise
- Establish monthly events to draw additional visitors to the center. For example:
  - January - Get to know us and a First Day Hike
  - February - Valentines night under the stars with special feathered guests and programs
  - March - Bird of Prey Art Show and Festival
  - April - Baby Bird Shower
  - May - Falconry Workshop
  - June - Flying Wild - Camp for Teachers
  - July - Eagles - Our National Bird
  - August - Grow your own food
  - September - Fall Festival
  - October - The Bird of Prey Ball
  - November - We celebrate the Wild Turkey with a vegetarian focus
  - December - Stroll through our Raptor Wonderland

**Continually soliciting for private donations and sponsorship is the life blood of any nonprofit organization.**

We need an individual in our organization whose sole job will be to continue to find funding for the center.

## Donations

We are a 501 (c) 3 or Non-profit corporation. **We survive on donations.**

All donations should go to Raptor Center of Tampa Bay and can be mailed or they may be given to you. Mailing addresses are: 11018 Scott Loop, Riverview, FL 33569 or PO Box 3638 Brandon, FL 33509

We are a listed charity with Benevity and a few other corporations that fundraise for major corporations. Check to see if your employer does donation matching. We are lucky to get checks from Duke Energy, Microsoft and Progressive Insurance to name a few. You may be able to donate to us through Payroll deduction. If you would like us to bring one of our educational ambassadors to your workplace to generate interest in the Raptor Center, let us know!

## Needed Supplies - Donations

What we need on an ongoing basis to take care of the birds:

- Gift certificates to Home Depot or Lowes for building supplies
- Trash bags – janitor, lawn and kitchen sizes
- Gauze rolls, especially Keflix
- Non-stick bandages and Tagaderm bandages
- Alcohol, chlorahexidine and peroxide



Help us every time you shop Amazon.  
Raptor Center of Tampa Bay Inc



Vet wrap, 1, 2 or 4 inch  
 Wood and hardware to build a wooden deck and mews  
 Bed or waterproof pads, Laundry detergent, Dawn dishwashing liquid  
 Large animal water bowls  
 Towels, Sheets and pillow cases  
 Fish that are freshly frozen especially shallow water fish (for osprey and eagles) also bait fish for water birds and gulls  
 Live meal worms and crickets – live [Buy Live Crickets and Worms – Armstrong Crickets Georgia](#)  
 Exact Kaytee hand feeding baby bird formula [Amazon.com : Kaytee Exact Hand Feeding For Baby Birds, 18 Oz : Kaytee Baby Bird Food : Pet Supplies](#)  
 corn meal, romaine lettuce, red grapes, carrots, kale  
 Fresh caught fish (that are found in shallow water or near the surface that an eagle or osprey could catch) including Lady Fish and bait fish  
 Chicks, rabbits, rats and mice bought from reputable sources (cannot be caught wild)  
 Bags of builders sand, gravel  
 Gift Certificates to Home Depot or Lowes for wood and hardware to build more mews  
 5lb bag of Dried Mealworms  
 3lb bag of Frozen Blueberries (Song Birds)  
 1000 ml Lactated Ringers Solution, this is used to hydrate birds just like a human getting an IV  
 Emeraid – Oral liquid nourishment for birds in critical care both Carnivore Care and Piscavore' Care  
 Oxbow - Carnivore Care  
 1 Box of 1ml Syringes, Sterile Tip, used to give oral medicine  
 Heating Pads, without auto shut off  
 Bird Seed – Mealworms and bird seed is used for a variety of birds  
 Annual baby bird season is Spring/Summer  
 Pet Antibiotic Ointment  
 Vet Oral Antibiotics  
 Mite & Lice Bird Spray  
 Rubbing Alcohol and Peroxide  
 Disposable Gloves  
 Wound care products: Gauze, tape, vet wrap, etc.  
 Cleaning products – laundry detergent, bleach, dawn soap, sponges, white vinegar, etc.

Don't forget to sign up for Amazon Smile and select The Raptor Center of Tampa Bay as your charity of choice.

“A COPY OF THE OFFICIAL REGISTRTION AND FINANCIAL INFORMATION MAY BE OBTAINED FROM THE DIVISION OF CONSUMER SERVICES BY CALLING TOLL-FREE (800-435-7352) WITHIN THE STATE REGISTRATION DOES NOT IMPLY ENDORSEMENT, APPROVAL, OR RECOMMENDATION BY THE STATE.”

## Membership Program

We have established a membership program that renews annually. Membership Program

There are various levels of membership. From a Basic Membership Starting at just \$35.00 for an individual and \$100.00 for a family you get your membership card and a

- RCTB Newsletter quarterly - Find out what the center has been doing.

We have a level for everyone!





Great Horned Owl - \$1000  
Barn Owl - \$750  
Caracara \$500  
Red-Tailed Hawk \$250  
Peregrine Falcon \$100  
Eastern Screech Owl \$75

Each level comes with increased benefits such as a Birthday "Shout Out" by an Educational Ambassador, Invitation to attend a live Bald Eagle release, RCTB T-Shirt, Gift Store Discounts, etc.

## Animal Adoptions

We have 2 Eastern Screech Owls and a Crested Caracara that are permanent birds that live at the center all the time. They would like to be adopted for the year and they can teach you all about birds!

Various adoption levels are available. Ask for details.

## Sponsorships

We have four levels of sponsors:

1. Sponsor - \$1,000
2. Contributing - \$5,000 annually
3. Supporting - \$15,000 annually
4. Sustaining - \$20,000 + annually

The Center is being founded to serve the needs of injured birds of prey in the Tampa Bay Area. There are approximately 3.4 million people in our immediate service area that includes: Hillsborough, Manatee, Pasco, Pinellas and Polk Counties. Currently there is no single facility that can accommodate all of the different species of birds of prey that we have in our area for rehabilitation and flight conditioning.

Our practices will be based on sound and proven protocols. We plan to appropriately budget, find and hire a rehabber and Certified Vet Technician (CVT) that is experienced with birds of prey, including eagles.

Our hospital will include a state-of-the-art exam room, and eventually x-ray and laboratory facilities on-site.

Sponsorship Opportunities are endless! How would you like to see your name on the outside of our 100 foot flight cage?

Clinic Building sponsorship needs abound. Ask any of your Board of Directors for a sponsorship package and for help approaching corporations, family members and friends.

Sponsors are always needed and are the lifeblood of any non-profit organization.

Here are just a few of our projects:

Build 5 wooden flight cages  
Build 12 wooden rehabilitation cages  
Install a new kitchen

Install a new bathroom and septic system  
Build a clinic  
Build wooden mews for permanent residents.  
Build an Owl House for Permanent Residents  
Just to name a few!

Natures Guardians - kids in both public and home schooled environments. See our website for complete details.

## Grants

We apply for grants that are applicable to the organization and its purpose on an on-going basis. Because the awarding of grants is uncertain, our focus is on generating revenue through donations, educational ventures and membership fees.

## Other Ways you can help

- Amazon Smile <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/83-2029876>
- Go fund me - look for a special charity Go Fund me campaign this October. <https://charity.gofundme.com/o/en/campaign/save-tampa-bays-wildlife>
- Giving Tuesday - Giving Tuesday is a global day of giving fueled by the power of social media and collaboration. Celebrated on the Tuesday following the widely-recognized shopping events Black Friday and Cyber Monday, #Giving Tuesday celebrates the charitable season, when many focus on their holiday and end-of-year giving. We hope that we are your charity of choice.
- Mail checks, gas and gift cards to:  
PO box 3638  
Brandon, FL 33509
- Venmo - Raptor Center of Tampa Bay
- Zelle - 813-205-1851



## Education - Nature's Guardians

Natures Guardians is a Nature Club for kids that exposes them to indigenous plants and animals, conservation, and helps them develop a love and appreciation for nature and all it's beauty!

Our content is enjoyable for kids of all ages from 8 – 99. Bring the whole family!

We focus on education and awareness of the environment and wildlife through our Florida Wildlife Series.

Our Educational initiatives include a minimum of 12 programs a year that celebrate the natural environment and conservation that drive the educational experience and facilitate learning through:

- Delivering a scheduled program the third Friday of each month held in local parks and conservation areas.
- Create digital content and web-based experiences to our curriculum to accommodate distance learning.
- Offer our outdoor programs as a educational resource for schools, community and youth organizations.
- Strengthen our connections with local colleges and universities by offering internships and other educational opportunities.



## Events and Activities

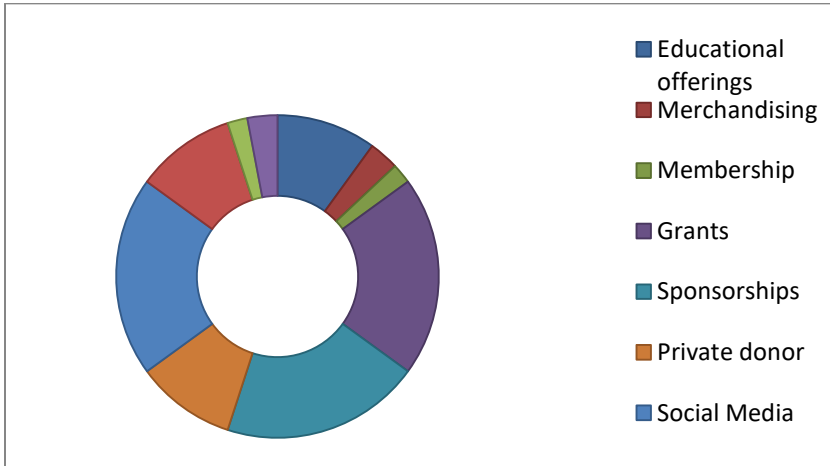
- Create an organizational infrastructure to support a series of events and activities that engage a diverse audience and continue to expand and enhance our signature events by:
- **Create an Event Committee** to manage events and establish roles of volunteers to formalize event oversight and management and to ensure quality and continuity.
- **Increase sponsorships**, as well as paid and donated marketing, communications and advertising.
- **Strengthen partnerships** with outside organizations to assist in planning, funding, and promoting.
- **Signature Events** will include the Wonders of Wildlife Festivals



## Marketing and Public Relations

- Create a robust Marketing Plan to promote the Centers activities, events, programs and sponsor opportunities through:
- Develop specific marketing materials for both the center and for our education programs and workshops.
- Collaborate with companies, organizations and public relations entities to expand our presence.
- Increase utilization of print and digital media platforms.
- Move outside of Social Media.

## Fiscal Resources and Finances



- Increase and diversify our revenue stream to meet operating expenses as well as for future capital projects.
- Secure individual, company and corporate sponsorships.
- Include fundraising as a part of each activity, program, and event.
- Seek and apply for grants.

## Advocacy

- Advocate for land to build our center and function as a green space for public enjoyment and conservation education and engagement. Pursue Corporate resources and funds to acquire land and build the Wildlife Rehabilitation Center that the Tampa Bay Area and surrounding counties so desperately needs.



## Infrastructure

- Strengthen the Board through the recruitment of diverse Board members.
- Provide training and create a succession plan for each of our key positions.
- Enhance the entire process of recruiting, training, mentoring and rewarding of volunteers.
- Acquire Land by 12/31/2022.
- Get, buy or build a clinic. We already own everything to outfit it.
- Build 12 - 8 x 8 x 8 rehabilitation cages.
- Build 2 large flight cages locally.





- The Raptor Center of Tampa Bay is a 501 (C) 3 Corporation. We are currently operating out of our rehabbers home in Brandon, FL .
- In 2020 we had a volunteer purchase a piece of land and we entered into a lease to purchase agreement on about 1 acre of land in Riverview Florida. After closing and working aggressively, with the help of over 100 volunteers, we cleared 170 tons of concrete, weeds, and garbage. The owner put new roofs on the buildings. We began to paint them and renovate them. In order to change out our electrical service, add a septic tank and renovate our buildings an architect was hired and plans were drawn up. On 12/17/2020 we were advised by Hillsborough County that the previous owners had subdivided the land incorrectly without presenting it to the board of county commissioners. In the mean time in January 2021 Hillsborough County passed a law saying there could be no more septic tanks in the Alafia River Basin and the county would not pay for hook up. To hook up to county sewer would be \$280,000. Our plans were squashed and our dream turned into a nightmare. Over a year later, the owner of the property and his attorney have not resolved the matter leaving us without a place to call home.
- No time has been more important than now. When Bald Eagles and Great Horned Owls are nesting and babies are growing up, it does not take long before one ends up on the ground hurt, orphaned or sick and needs our help. The size birds that we rehabilitate require larger caging than we currently can provide to a variety of species at one time.
- Our goal is to create a workable strategic plan that allows for us to spread our wings and move on to a piece of land that is 2+ acres, ideally without a mortgage.
- A rehabber is expected to be all things to every human and animal. Whether that be greeting people, being the EMT who stabilizes the patient or being the marketing and public relations director. We are the psychologist and counselor to provide comfort and understanding for the humans that we interact with. We are psychics and detectives who follow both our gut instinct and our experiences to figure out what happed to our patients. We are technicians gathering and recording the details for reports and charts. We are the expected care givers 24/7, 365 days a year. We are often the financial backers of our work. Our services are in great demand! Our volume has grown much larger than one person can effectively do out of a small space and we need to find a home for our wildlife rehabilitation center.



- We do make a difference every day to the animals and people that have come to count on us. We help just as many people as we do animals. We need to expand our team and acquire land in order to achieve our Strategic Objective of building a center, opened to the public, with a focus on Conservation Education.
- Over 1000 birds and animals each year, and the person behind each one, are counting on us to get this right. Please we can't let them down!
- Build an outdoor open-air classroom to accommodate social distancing.





## NESTING SEASONS - FLORIDA RAPTORS

Species	Nesting Season	Nest Type	Avg. Incubation	Avg. Age to Fledging
<b>American Kestrel</b>	March - June	Natural or man-made cavity	29 - 31 days	28 - 30 days
<b>Bald Eagle</b>	Nov - Jun	Tall pine or cypress trees	33 - 35 days	70 - 84 days
<b>Barn Owl</b>	Jan - Dec	Natural or man-made cavity	30 - 34 days	45 - 50 days
<b>Barred Owl</b>	Jan - March	Natural (sometimes man-made) cavity	28 - 32 days	40 - 45 days
<b>Black Vulture</b>	Jan - Aug	On ground in dense vegetation	38 - 40 days	70 - 80 days
<b>Black-shouldered Kite</b>	March - June (S.Fl)	Tall pines, cypress & mangrove	28 - 29 days	36 - 41 days
<b>Broad-winged Hawk</b>	March - June (N. Fla)	Hardwood trees,	28 - 30 days	35 - 42 days
<b>Burrowing Owl</b>	March - June	Underground in burrows	21 - 28 days	26 - 30 days
<b>Cooper's Hawk</b>	April - July	Tall hardwood trees	30 - 32 days	27 - 30 days
<b>Crested Caracara</b>	Dec - June (C. & S. Fla)	Cabbage palms	28 - 33 days	34 - 45 days
<b>Eastern Screech-owl</b>	March - June	Natural or man-made cavity	25 - 27 days	30 - 32 days
<b>Great Horned Owl</b>	Nov - April	Abandoned large nests	28 - 30 days	45 - 50 days
<b>Mississippi Kite</b>	April - Aug (N. Fla)	Tall pines and hardwoods	28 - 30 days	34 - 42 days
<b>Osprey</b>	Dec. - April	Dead or live trees, man-made structures	30 - 33 days	48 - 58 days
<b>Red-shouldered Hawk</b>	Jan - May	Pines and hardwoods	28 - 32 days	35 - 45 days

## NESTING SEASONS - FLORIDA RAPTORS

<b>Red-tailed Hawk</b>	Feb - June	Pines and hardwoods	28 - 32 days	43 - 48 days
<b>Short-tailed Hawk</b>	Feb - June	Tall pines and hardwoods	28 - 32 days	Unknown
<b>Swallow-tailed Kite</b>	March - June	Tall pines and hardwoods	28 - 29 days	36 - 40 days
<b>Snail Kite</b>	Feb - June	Marsh vegetation	28 - 30 days	28 - 30 days
<b>Turkey Vulture</b>	March - July	On ground in dense vegetation, hollow log or cavity	38 - 40 days	70 - 80 days

Note: Species not listed do not breed in Florida, though, some do migrate through, e.g. Peregrine Falcons.

## FORMS





Transported to: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Disposition: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Species: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Rec'd Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Transport Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**WILD LIFE TRANSPORT FORM**

Volunteer Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Home #: \_\_\_\_\_ Miles Traveled: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Work #: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell #: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ St: FL Zip \_\_\_\_\_ County: \_\_\_\_\_

Second Transporter: \_\_\_\_\_

Please answer the following questions completely so that we may insure the best care possible.

Where did you find the bird? Street name or closest intersection. It was found at: Donation: \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Persons name that called: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ County: \_\_\_\_\_

Please try and always record this information. If it turns out the bird was shot, this information is critical to file a report with FWC law enforcement. It also helps us know where to return the bird to upon release.

What was the situation you found the bird in (e.g. lying in the road)? \_\_\_\_\_

What caused the bird's injury, if known? (i.e. hit by car) \_\_\_\_\_

When did you find the bird? Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_ (AM or PM) circle one

Was the bird fed? circle one Yes No Did it drink water? circle one Yes No

If yes to either, what did it eat/drink and how much if known: \_\_\_\_\_

Was medical care given circle one Yes No

If yes, please explain and attach copies of medical records:(write notes on back) \_\_\_\_\_

Please provide any other information that we need to know about this wildlife.

BABY BIRDS:

Do you know where the nest is located? \_\_\_\_\_ Have you seen the parents in the area of the nest? Yes No *circle one*  
 Is the bird a candidate for re-nesting? Please explain why you believe it is or is not possible to re-nest. Provide pictures of the tree please. They can be texted to 813-205-1851

**General Exam**

Identification Band: _____ Estimated Age: _____ Sex: _____ Body Condition: Emaciated, Thin, Reasonable, Good, Plump <i>(circle one)</i>
---

Species: \_\_\_\_\_

Number: \_\_\_\_\_

VET: \_\_\_\_\_

Date	Time	Food / Medicine / Other Misc. Activities
		Weight: _____ Grams <i>(If bird is hooded remember to subtract the weight of the hood.)</i>

Dehydration - None, Mild, Moderate, Severe  
 Attitude: Alert, Quiet, Depressed, somewhat responsive, not responsive, comatose  
 Mucous Membrane Color: Pink, Pale, White, Blue, Yellow, Pigmented  
 Mucous Membrane Texture: Moist, Tacky, Oily  
 Eyes/Ears/Mouth/Nares  
 Neurologic: No significant findings/ abnormal  
 Heart/Lungs: : No significant findings/ abnormal  
 GI/Vent: : No significant findings/ abnormal  
 Musculoskeletal: : No significant findings/ abnormal  
 Feathers/Skin: : No significant findings/ abnormal  
 Body: : No significant findings/ abnormal  
 Wings/Arms: : No significant findings/ abnormal  
 Legs/Feet/Hocks:: No significant findings/ abnormal

Date	Time	Treatment



## **Wildlife Admissions**

Animal Care Center 813-987-5353

Directions: Fill out one form per animal as completely as possible and attach the form to the crate or send with transporter.

**Date:**

**Your name and contact info:**

**Species and age (juvenile/adult) if known:**

**Date animal was captured:**

**Exact location animal was captured if known:**

**Describe injury or problem:**

**If animal has been to BG before, please provide patient number and date of last exam:**

**Date and time animal last ate any food, if known:**

**If the animal can be discharged today, who should we contact about pick-up and care instructions?**

**List any medications and fluids given. Include dose/amount and time:**

**Comments:**



## Baby Raptor Return to Nest Form

\_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

Date returned

\_\_\_\_\_  
Contact Person

\_\_\_\_\_  
Species

\_\_\_\_\_  
File # (s)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address

\_\_\_\_\_  
City / Zip

\_( ) \_\_\_\_\_  
Home phone

\_( ) \_\_\_\_\_  
Work phone

\_( ) \_\_\_\_\_  
Cell phone

### **DIRECTIONS TO NEST:**

### **PERMISSION TO ACCESS PROPERTY BY:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Is this the landowner?

YES

NO

**CLIMBER:** \_\_\_\_\_

**PHONE # ( )** \_\_\_\_\_

**ADULT BIRDS LAST SEEN IN AREA:** (include if other siblings seen-are they in/out of nest)

**DESCRIPTION OF AREA:** (example nest down, under live pine in NW corner of lot)

**SUPPLIES NEEDED:**

**ACTION TAKEN:** (include date and by whom)

**FOLLOW UP:** (include date and by whom)









## Request for 24 Hour Permit to Temporarily Possess Sick or Injured Wildlife

Applicant Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Business Name: Raptor Center of Tampa Bay, Inc

Applicant Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone # 813-205-1851

Applicant Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Authorized locations information (where the wildlife is to be transported.)

1. Business Name: Raptor Center of Tampa Bay

Name of Permitted Wildlife Rehabilitator or Veterinarian: Nancy Murrah

Address of Rehabilitator or Veterinarian: 2002 Elk Spring Drive, Brandon FL 33511-1725

Phone Number of Rehabilitator or Veterinarian: 813-205-1851

2. Business Name: Name of Permitted Wildlife Rehabilitator or Veterinarian: Audubon Center for Birds of Prey

Name of Permitted Wildlife Rehabilitator or Veterinarian: Dianna Flynt

Address of Rehabilitator or Veterinarian: 1101 Audubon Way, Maitland, FL 32751

Phone Number of Rehabilitator or Veterinarian: 407-644-0190

3. Business Name: Name of Permitted Wildlife Rehabilitator or Veterinarian: Busch Gardens Tampa

Name of Permitted Wildlife Rehabilitator or Veterinarian: Peter Black, DVM

Address of Rehabilitator or Veterinarian: 10165 N McKinley Drive, Tampa FL 33612

Phone Number of Rehabilitator or Veterinarian: 813-382-7169

4. Business Name: Name of Permitted Wildlife Rehabilitator or Veterinarian: Back to Nature Wildlife Refuge

Name of Permitted Wildlife Rehabilitator or Veterinarian: Debbie Helsel

Address of Rehabilitator or Veterinarian: 10525 Clapp Simms Duda Road, Orlando, FL 32832

Phone Number of Rehabilitator or Veterinarian: 407-568-5138

5. Business Name: Name of Permitted Wildlife Rehabilitator or Veterinarian: Avian Reconditioning Center

Name of Permitted Wildlife Rehabilitator or Veterinarian: Carol McCorkle

Address of Rehabilitator or Veterinarian: 323 W Lester Road, Apopka, FL 32712

Phone Number of Rehabilitator or Veterinarian: 407-461-1056

6. Business Name: Linda Mercado (All Birds Rescue Rehab Release)

Name of Permitted Wildlife Rehabilitator or Veterinarian: Linda Mercado

Address of Rehabilitator or Veterinarian: 12563 82 Ave Seminole FL .

Phone Number of Rehabilitator or Veterinarian 904-703-2816

7. Business Name: Seaside Seabird Sanctuary

Name of Permitted Wildlife Rehabilitator or Veterinarian: Melissa Dollard

Address of Rehabilitator or Veterinarian: 18328 Gulf Blvd. Indian Shores, FL 33785

Phone Number of Rehabilitator or Veterinarian: Melissa Dollard 727-391-6211

8. Business Name: Care Animal Hospital

Name of Permitted Wildlife Rehabilitator or Veterinarian Courtney Bronson

Address of Rehabilitator or Veterinarian: 511 E Bloomingdale, Brandon, FL 33511

Phone Number of Rehabilitator or Veterinarian: 813-684-6287

9. Business Name: Blue Pearl Veterinary Specialist

Address of Rehabilitator or Veterinarian:

607 Lumsden Professional Ct. Brandon, FL 33511 813-571-3303

3000 Busch Lake Blvd. Tampa, FL 33614 813-933-8944

4525 Ulmerton Road, Clearwater, FL 33762 727-572-0132

Phone Number of Rehabilitator or Veterinarian: 813-571-3303

10. Business Name: Penny Boehme

Name of Permitted Wildlife Rehabilitator or Veterinarian: Penny Boehme

Address of Rehabilitator or Veterinarian: 5225 24th Terrace North, St. Petersburg 33710

Phone Number of Rehabilitator or Veterinarian: 727-323-0047

Permit to transport to a rehabilitation facilities and veterinary clinics

ALL 24 HOUR PERMITS TO TEMPORARILY POSSESS SICK OR INJURED WILDLIFE EXPIRE THE LAST DAY OF THE CURRENT YEAR.

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Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_

# Volunteer Application



Contact Information

Name	
Street Address	
City ST ZIP Code	
Home Phone	
Work Phone	
E-Mail Address	

Availability

During which hours are you available for volunteer assignments?

- Weekday mornings
- Weekday afternoons
- Weekday evenings
- Weekend mornings
- Weekend afternoons
- Weekend evenings

Interests

Tell us in which areas you are interested in volunteering (check all that apply)

- Administration
- Education Programs
- Field work - rescue
- Fundraising
- Transportation
- Internet and Social Media
- Festival coordination
- Land Acquisition & Start up for center
- Volunteer coordination

Special Skills or Qualifications

Summarize special skills and qualifications you have acquired from employment, previous volunteer work, or through other activities, including hobbies or sports that makes you an asset to our team.

Previous Volunteer Experience

Summarize your previous volunteer experience.

--

Person to Notify in Case of Emergency

Name	
Street Address	
City ST ZIP Code	
Home Phone	
Work Phone	
E-Mail Address	

Background Information

Note: A "Yes" answer to these questions will not automatically bar you from volunteering. The nature, job-relatedness, severity and date of the offense in relation to the volunteer position for which you are applying are considered. It is the policy of Raptor Center of Tampa Bay, Inc. that all current and new volunteers, who work closely with the public and each other could be subject to a security background check.

Have you ever been convicted of a crime which is a felony or first degree misdemeanor?

Yes  No

Have you ever been asked to vacate a volunteer position?

Yes  No

If 'yes' to any of the questions, please explain, what charges or convictions and where?

--

Agreement and Signature

By submitting this application, I affirm that the facts set forth in it are true and complete. I understand that if I am accepted as a volunteer, any false statements, omissions, or other misrepresentations made by me on this application may result in my immediate dismissal.

Name (printed)	
Signature	
Date	

Our Policy

It is the policy of this organization to provide equal opportunities without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, gender, sexual preference, age, or disability.

Thank you for completing this application form and for your interest in volunteering with us.

## VOLUNTEER AGREEMENT AND LIABILITY WAIVER

THIS VOLUNTEER AGREEMENT AND LIABILITY WAIVER (the "Agreement") is executed by the undersigned party (the "Volunteer"), and *The Raptor Center of Tampa Bay, Inc.* INC., a Florida non-profit corporation ("RCTB"). Now, therefore, in consideration of the mutual covenants contained herein and other good and valuable consideration, the receipt and sufficiency of which are hereby acknowledged, the parties agree as follows:

1. **Volunteer Services.** Volunteer will work for RCTB on a volunteer basis. Volunteer's services shall be donated and Volunteer is not entitled to nor expects any present or future salary, wages, or other benefits for these voluntary services. Volunteer is not considered an employee of RCTB.
2. **Direction and Training.** Volunteer will follow the supervision and direction of any personnel, employee, board member, or volunteer of RCTB to whom Volunteer has been assigned to perform services, and will participate in any training required by RCTB
3. **Volunteer Conduct.** Volunteer will:
  - a. Support RCTB's mission and policies.
  - b. Present a professional image when performing volunteer work.
  - c. Uphold a high level of customer service and professionalism at all times including by maintaining a courteous and supportive attitude.
  - d. Only participate in approved assignments and duties as directed by RCTB
  - e. Make a good faith effort to resolve differences and problems
  - f. Not engage in malicious talk, negative criticism, spreading rumors, and the like.
  - g. Not use this position to secure special privileges, benefits, personal business, or exemptions for Volunteer's own gain or for any other person.
4. **Physical Demands and Hazards.** Participation as a Volunteer may be physically demanding and Volunteer will exercise reasonable care to avoid injury. Volunteer is voluntarily participating in this activity with knowledge of the hazards and potential dangers involved, and accepts any and all associated risks of injury and property damage.
5. **Waiver of Liability; Indemnification.** Volunteer, their assignees, heirs, guardians, and legal representatives, releases RCTB, its officers, board members, volunteers, employees, and agents from all present and future liability (including liability for negligence) to volunteer for damages resulting from physical injury, property damage, or other loss arising out of or relating to their volunteering or this agreement. Volunteer will indemnify RCTB and hold RCTB harmless against any claims of or liability to a third party for damages resulting from physical injury, property damage, or other loss arising out of or relating to their volunteering or this agreement. Volunteer will pay RCTB's reasonable attorneys' fees and costs related to defending any action governed by this paragraph.
6. **No Insurance Coverage; Medical Treatment.** If volunteer is injured in the course of the volunteer service, volunteer is not covered by any workers' compensation or other insurance program of RCTB. RCTB may seek emergency medical treatment in case of injury, accident, or illness to Volunteer arising from Volunteer's service. Volunteer will be responsible for medical costs incurred by such injury, accident, or illness.
7. **Materials and Tools.** The materials and tools provided by RCTB are and remain the property of RCTB, and Volunteer will return these materials and tools to RCTB on request or at the end of Volunteer's service.
8. **Data.** All data or information collected during Volunteer's service is and remains the property of RCTB and Volunteer will provide such data or information to RCTB on request.



9. Termination; No Appeal of Decision. Volunteer's service can be terminated at any time, with or without cause, by RCTB or Volunteer, and Volunteer does not have the right to grieve or appeal such termination.
10. Governing Law. Florida law governs any dispute arising out of this Agreement. The parties have selected Hillsborough County, Florida as the mandatory and exclusive forum for resolution of any dispute arising out of or relating to this Agreement.
11. Complete Agreement. This Agreement contains and sets forth the complete understanding and agreement of the parties, and supersedes all prior written or oral discussions, agreements, communications, or representations.
12. Attorney Fees and Costs. Each party shall bear its own costs, including attorney fees, incurred in connection with this Agreement, except that in connection with any litigation arising out of this Agreement, including, without limitation, all trial, appellate and post-judgment proceedings, the prevailing party will be entitled to recover reasonable attorneys' fees and costs.
13. Construction of Agreement. All parties to this Agreement are deemed to have participated in its drafting. In the event of any ambiguity in the terms of this Agreement, the parties agree that such ambiguity shall be construed without regard to which of the parties drafted the provision in question.
14. Severability. In the event any portion or provisions of this Agreement is deemed invalid, the remaining provisions will not be affected and will remain in full force and effect.

**I have carefully read this agreement and fully understand its contents. I am aware that this agreement includes a release of liability and indemnification, and sign it of my own free will:**

Volunteer:

Raptor Center of Tampa Bay, Inc.,  
 a Florida non-profit corporation

By: \_\_\_\_\_

By: \_\_\_\_\_

Nancy Murrah, President

Print: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



Raptor Center of Tampa Bay Inc.  
PO Box 3638  
Brandon, FL 33509  
813-205-1851

To: All Friends of the Raptor Center of Tampa Bay

We are excited to introduce our new Membership Program. In case you have not heard we have a center in Riverview, FL. Now we can finally offer a membership program and it's time to launch it!

The basic individual membership is \$35.00. You get our newsletter 2 times a year, a membership card and pre-notice to all events. Most importantly you will be helping the birds and animals that come to the Raptor Center for help and healing.

There is a family membership for \$100.00 and a Corporate for \$250.00. We need every penny of that and more to buy land, build several large flight cages, rehabilitation mews, outfitting our clinic, putting a kitchen and bathroom in. . . . the list goes on and on.

Memberships make great presents! Please share this with all of your friends and family.

Can we count on your membership today?

Sincerely,

Nancy Murrah  
President  
Wildlife Rehabilitator & Educational Coordinator  
Raptor Center of Tampa Bay

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Level of Membership

- Individual
- Family
- Corporate

Payment can be made by check, credit card or pay pal. Please indicate "membership" on the check or in the comment section of Pay Pal.

Checks can be sent to Raptor Center of Tampa Bay, PO Box 3638, Brandon, FL 33509

Here is a link to donate on-line:

<http://www.raptorcenteroftampa.org/donate/>

You can also text the word "raptor" to 77948 for a link. Indicate membership in the notes section .

